

To Our Taxpayers: Did Your Property Tax Bill Go Up? Get the Facts!

You might be surprised when you open your property tax bill this year. At a time when home values are declining and local officials are carefully monitoring the expenditure of tax revenues, the last thing you expect to see is an increase in the amount of taxes you owe.

For the last decade, homeowners in Georgia have benefited from a credit on property tax bills given by the State called the Homeowners Tax Relief Grant. This program did not reduce the amount of taxes that you owed to your local government, but it did reduce the amount that you had to pay out of pocket. The state government basically paid the difference between what was due and what you had to pay.

You may not have ever noticed the line on your previous tax bills indicating that you had received the Homeowners Tax Relief Grant credit from the Governor and the General Assembly. Typically, this credit represented a \$200 - \$300 savings to you on your property tax bill. However, due to financial strains on the state's budget, the Georgia General Assembly and the Governor did not fund this credit for 2009, so you will not see this reduction on your property tax bill this year.

For more information about the elimination of the Homeowners Tax Relief Grant and about property taxes in Georgia, you may go to www.factsaboutpropertytax.com.

Property taxes are the primary source of revenue needed to fund services by your county government which provide for the health, safety and welfare of our community, including our education system. Many of these services are mandated by the State of Georgia but are paid for with your local tax dollars.

The Fayette County Board of Commissioners did not increase county tax rates this year. Typical services provided by your county government include roadway construction and maintenance, courts, jail services, public safety services, recreation, community development services, to name a few. It is important to note, however, that the portion of your tax bill that the Board of Commissioners is responsible for totals less than 25% of your total bill. If you live within one of our municipalities that also imposes a city tax, that percentage is even less. A large majority of property taxes in Fayette County go to our school system. For information concerning the budget for the school system, you can contact the Offices of the Fayette County Board of Education at 770-460-3535.

For information about the county's budget, you may contact the Fayette County Finance Department at 770-305-5413. A summary of the Fiscal Year 2010 Approved Budget is available for viewing on the County's website at www.fayettecountyga.gov. Click on "Departments", then "Finance", and then "Annual Budget".